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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
EXTENSION SERVICE  
Washington 25, D. C.

Reserve

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE  
RURAL CHURCH LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES  
of  
AGENCIES OF U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Washington, D. C. March 12-13, 1946

Origin and Purpose of Conference

At the suggestion of rural church leaders, M. L. Wilson, Director of the Federal Extension Service, invited some of the rural church leaders to meet with representatives of the Department of Agriculture (1) to discuss problems and programs of rural life which are of concern to both of these groups, (2) to bring about a better understanding of the rural programs of church groups and the activities and contributions of agricultural agencies, and (3) to explore opportunities for collaborative efforts between agricultural agencies and rural church groups to improve farming and rural life.

Procedure

The round-table discussion method was used during the four 2-hour sessions of the conference. After the introductory statements by Dr. Landis and Director Wilson, the discussion leaders directed the group toward exploring (1) problems on which church leaders desired assistance from the USDA agencies, (2) services available from the agencies and how to obtain them, (3) organization and content of rural church programs, and (4) projects and programs in which the church leaders and agency representatives have a common interest.

Opening Statements by Landis and Wilson

High points in the remarks of Dr. Benson Y. Landis, of the Federal Council of Churches, are as follows. Rural churches have had an interest in the whole community. The conference is to be informal and exploratory in nature. There are common interests between the rural church administrators and people in the Department of Agriculture. The Department once published a bulletin, Rural Church and Cooperative Extension Work. For some years the churches, Catholic and Protestant, have conducted summer schools for the clergy. Some of the schools are held at land-grant colleges and serve to increase the contacts between workers in the rural churches and the people working in agriculture. Representatives of the colleges of agriculture and the U. S. Department of Agriculture teach in these schools.



Some of the key ideas presented by Director M. L. Wilson are summarized. The Federal Department of Agriculture covers the whole realm of agriculture. Its activities are divided into four different spheres. One deals with research in connection with sciences involving agricultural production and the economic and social aspects of agriculture. Another sphere deals with regulatory matters, such as the inspection of meats and slaughterhouses, and the carrying out of acts of Congress of a protective nature in relation to agriculture and in relation to the health of people, plants, and animals. A third phase, commonly called the action or service agencies, include the Production and Marketing Administration (activities formerly with the AAA and those having to do with wartime and marketing), the Farm Security Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Credit Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, and a few others.

The fourth group of activities, primarily educational in nature, involve translating the scientific and other factual knowledge developed in the Department of Agriculture to the farm people in such a form that it is unified and directly related to their lives. In this field the Cooperative Extension Service plays its part. It is cooperative in the sense that the Department of Agriculture, the land-grant college in each State, and the counties work closely together in the extension program which is developed largely by farm people on the basis of their local needs.

During the past decade several milestones of progress had been passed in educational services to farm people--the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Department of Agriculture, the 50th anniversary of the experiment stations, and the 25th anniversary of the Extension Service. When the agriculture building, in which the meeting was held, was constructed, it was decided to name sections after some person or some idea that typifies the spirit and services of the Department. One of the bridges across to the main building was named in honor of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, who had much to do with the development of demonstration as an effective method of extension. The other arch was named after James ("Tama Jim") Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture for 16 years. The auditorium was named after Thomas Jefferson, the father of the idea of using science in farming in this country. He was well read in the sciences related to agriculture. He recognized the need for feeding the soil, and the contribution of agriculture to the expansion of democracy.

Much progress has been made in extension work, but there is still much to be done. In a third of a century, about 10 million boys and girls have been in 4-H Clubs, many of whom are now farmers and farmers' wives. Home demonstration work has been steadily expanded, now reaching about two-thirds of the counties. The Extension programs and the educational activities of other agricultural agencies have reached most of the farmers and have brought changes in their attitude toward science in agriculture, and their understanding of it. Methods of production have changed, and standards of living have risen.

The people who work the land and care for growing things are constantly in touch with the mysteries of nature and the processes of life. Such a relationship between man and nature causes farm people to have a material interest in religion and a wholesome attitude toward it.



The agricultural colleges and the Department of Agriculture have always emphasized a balanced program for farming. By a balanced program we refer to the emphasis and relationships of the forces of science, of education, and of religion, as they are related to individuals and rural communities. The representatives of the Department of Agriculture are, consequently, interested in meeting with the representatives of the various religious groups that are interested in rural life.

#### A Few Significant Statements on the Rural Church

During the 2-day meeting, many significant statements were made. A few are summarized below.

1. Churches have a deep concern about soil conservation, the prosperity of farmers, and rural welfare. Poor land means poor people and poor churches. There is a definite relation between the rebuilding of soil and the rebuilding of human beings.

2. Cooperation among the churches is being extended. Many of the Protestant churches work together in the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council, and the International Council of Religious Education. These have a joint committee on town and country. Lutheran churches cooperate in the National Lutheran Council. The Protestant and Catholic bodies work together in many ways, such as preparing the recent pamphlet, Man's Relation to the Land.

3. Church bodies are increasing their interest in the rural church. Seminaries are adding rural departments. Denominations have established national and State rural church committees. The in-service schools and institutes are being given greater attention.

4. In training the clergy for rural life, we are not attempting to make them agricultural specialists. We do, however, want them to understand enough about farming and rural life to be able to give general agricultural guidance and encourage church members to use agricultural services.

5. The urban church is concerned about the rural church--its effectiveness in reaching people and the attitudes it creates--since about one-half of rural youth move to cities for job opportunities.

6. The church leaders, and especially the local clergy, have a great effect upon the attitude of the church members toward scientific agriculture and community life.

Farm people tend to think and act on the basis of previously acquired ideas, all too frequently influenced by prejudices and biases. The clergy can assist in developing receptive attitudes toward facts, ideas, and opinions, and toward changes in the economic and cultural life.

7. Educational leaders are uncertain how to work with church groups, since there are so many different bodies. Church people, also, are confused about the functions and relationships of the Federal and State agricultural agencies and the number and activities of the farm and cooperative organizations. Experience is the best way of obtaining answers to this situation.

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Agricultural leaders may need to take the lead in making contacts with church leaders, who, in many communities, are not working together.

8. There is a shortage of rural ministers. The young clergymen tend to seek town and city churches. The seminaries are not training sufficient ministers to provide for replacements. The shortage of ministers trained for rural life is especially acute, since few seminaries have rural departments. Seminaries, in general, have an urban viewpoint.

Ministers need a broad training in rural life such as that provided by the agriculture colleges. Few ministers, however, come from the agriculture colleges.

9. The tenure of many ministers in rural communities is only 2 to 3 years, hardly time to become acquainted with the people and their institutions and beliefs.

10. The pastors are concerned with finding more effective methods of reaching the landless farmer--farm labor, croppers, and migrants.

11. The philosophy and goals of rural life are not well understood by ministers or rural people. We need to further develop a constructive rural philosophy among the people on the land.

12. The rural church leaders want to make greater use of the services of the Federal and State agricultural agencies and obtain improved mutual understanding with all the forces in rural life.

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#### Programs and Activities for Cooperative Effort of Rural Churches and Agricultural Agencies

1. Conferences of church leaders (clergy and lay) and representatives of agricultural agencies--to get acquainted, to discuss common problems, and to learn how to work together.

- (1) National.
- (2) Regional.
- (3) State.
- (4) County or local.

#### 2. Training of rural clergy.

(1) Preservice. Cooperative relationships include seminary students spending a semester or more at agricultural colleges, faculties of agricultural colleges teaching courses at seminaries, and publications and materials from agricultural agencies for use in classes at seminaries. A few cooperative programs between agricultural colleges and seminaries are in operation.

#### (2) In-service.

a. Schools and institutes of a few days to a few weeks. If schools are held at an agricultural college, church leaders should help in promotion and in planning the procedure and courses. For those held at



a seminary, denominational college, or camp, the USDA agencies and the agricultural colleges can provide lecturers, resource persons, and publications. Of the approximately 180 schools held in 1945, 16 were held on the campuses of agricultural colleges.

b. Extension classes in the community. Such classes might be organized for 1 day a week during the winter months and be handled jointly by representatives of church groups and the agricultural forces. The courses or meetings should be directly related to the problems of the local churches and the community. Tuskegee Institute and other Negro colleges are experimenting with such extension classes.

3. Research on the rural church. The agricultural experiment stations and the agricultural agencies have funds which might be used to obtain certain types of information on rural churches. Cooperation in research projects with seminaries, denominational colleges, and church bodies might be considered.

Much of the material on rural churches is not assembled in usable form. A book of readings on the rural church might be prepared to provide a balanced picture for rural leaders.

4. Membership on community councils and committees.

(1) Representatives of agricultural forces on denominational and interdenominational rural church committees, on county church councils, and on church programs.

(2) Representatives of the clergy on county agricultural committees, on community committees, and on agricultural programs.

5. Activities in communities. The agencies with representatives in the county or district, such as the Extension Service, Field Service of the Production and Marketing Administration, Farm Security Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Farm Credit Administration, and the Forestry Service can arrange for local demonstrations and field trips in cooperation with church groups. Rural churches sponsor adult educational programs in which specialists from the agricultural agencies could be more frequently used. The agricultural specialists can materially assist in Rural Life Sundays, and other similar events.

6. Preparation of Sunday school lesson materials. The people in agriculture could provide examples from farm life for use by those preparing Sunday school lessons for rural churches. Suggestions on methods of teaching Sunday school classes could also be prepared by the workers in agricultural education for use by those training Sunday school teachers.

7. Special problems for joint study. Joint committees and conferences of churches and agricultural agencies could study what churches might do on the following agricultural problems:

(1) Land-tenure policies and programs to strengthen the family farm.

(2) Religious and economic life of low-income farmers, especially labor, migrants, and share croppers.



- (3) Health and nutrition for the rural family.
- (4) Programs to maintain and build soil fertility, and use land resources wisely.
- (5) Cooperatives and cooperation in farm and community life.
- (6) Understanding of community and international relations.
- (7) Rural philosophy for people on the land.

Information Wanted by Rural Church Leaders  
From USDA Agencies

1. Bibliography of rural-life literature. A request from a rural church executive started plans for the preparation of such a bibliography under the direction of a USDA committee. The bibliography will probably be distributed by the USDA and through library extension services. Church groups could reproduce sections for their use.
2. Publications describing the agricultural agencies--their functions, how they operate, and how they can be used by church groups. A brief publication is needed to give the over-all picture of the USDA. A more complete descriptive story from each agency could be used.
3. Plan and procedure for distribution of information on publications, literature, and films of the USDA.

- (1) To bring files of desired publications up to date.
- (2) To obtain current publications as released, including mimeographed materials and speeches.

Before the war a list of available USDA publications was prepared annually. Some of the agencies send out check lists, monthly or less frequently. A monthly list of USDA publications is prepared. Sample copies may be sent with a subscription blank for such regular publications as the Land Policy Review, Foreign Agriculture, and Soil Conservation. The rural church leaders are interested in a wide variety of agricultural publications.

4. Press service to church papers. Many of the church papers could make effective use of the regular press services of the USDA.
5. Visual aids. Many clergymen wish to obtain not only usable visual materials, but also information on the preparation and use of their own materials.

6. Information on specific topics, such as:
  - (1) How rural churches can assist in soil conservation.
  - (2) Effect of a sugar tariff on Cuba.
  - (3) Effects of the shifts of population during the war period on agriculture.



- (4) How to set up a health cooperative.
- (5) Service programs to assist farm labor and share croppers.
- (6) How to develop receptive attitudes toward agricultural science.
- (7) How to keep the maximum number of people on the land, though not full-time farmers, and yet obtain adequate living standards.
- (8) Leisure activities in rural areas.
- (9) Type and size of family farms.
- (10) Use of social processes for constructive community improvement.
- (11) Function and place of agricultural villages.
- (12) General information on agricultural situation.
- (13) What should the church do for the farm home and family?
- (14) What it is about rural life that makes for character building.
- (15) Interpretation of economic and social facts in terms of activities and programs of rural churches.
- (16) Postwar price and production prospects for agriculture.

Information Wanted by Representatives of USDA From  
the Rural Church Leaders

1. Description of rural church programs--the educational activities of rural church groups--organization and procedure, emphases. How churches disseminate information on economic, social and agricultural topics.
2. Lists of rural church leaders--national, State, diocese, synod--to make contacts with and work with on State and community programs.
3. Facts on the rural church and religious situation in various sections of the country--problems, programs.
4. Types of information wanted by various church groups, and how to distribute publications and films and provide other services to such groups.
5. Current information on rural church programs. Several denominational and interdenominational publications, especially prepared for rural church leaders, are available. Sample publications of rural churches would be of value to the agricultural agencies.



Persons Attending Conference of Rural Church Leaders

and

Representatives of Agencies of U.S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D. C., March 12-13, 1946

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>
Alfred C. Bartholomew	Pastor, Evangelical & Reformed Church	
Edwin L. Becker	Disciples of Christ	222 S. Downey Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.
Edgar B. Brossard	President, Washington Stake, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	1628 Columbia Rd., N.W., Wash., D. C.
John W. P. Collier, Jr.	Student, Drew University	209 High St., Cranford, N. J.
Ralph A. Felton	Rural Church Dept., Drew Seminary	Madison, N. J.
James S. Foley	Nat. Cath. Rural Life Conference	Mt. Holly, N. J.
William J. Gibbons, S.J.	"America", Natl. Cath. Weekly	329 W. 108th St., N.Y.
Garland A. Hendricks	Pastor, Southern Baptist	Apex, N. C.
Karl S. Henry	United Lutheran Church	231 Madison Ave., N.Y.
W. H. Jernagin	National Baptist Convention	1341 3d St., N. W., Wash., D. C.
Richard H. Johnson	Methodist Church Negro Program	St. Inigoes, Md.
B. Y. Landis	Federal Council of Churches	Woodward Bldg., Wash., D. C.
J. J. Leary	Natl. Cath. Rural Life Conference	Datonsville, Md.
Luigi G. Ligutti	Exec. Sec., Nat. Cath. Rural Life Conference	Des Moines, Iowa
Clarence W. Lokey	Methodist Bd. of Home Missions	150 5th Ave., N.Y.C.
Edith E. Lowry	Home Missions Council	297 4th Ave., N.Y.C.
James McKeown	Board of Domestic Missions-Prot. Episcopal Church, Drew Forest	
I. W. Moomaw	Church of the Brethren	Madison, N. J. 22 S. State St., Elgin, Ill.
John O'Grady	National Cath. Welfare Conference	1312 Mass. Ave., N.W., Wash., D. C.
Don F. Pielstick	Home Missions Council	297 4th Ave., N. Y. C.
Luther P. Powell	Student, Drew University	9-18th Ave., Paterson, N. J.
Henry S. Randolph	Bd. of Natl. Missions, Presbyterian Church, USA	156 5th Ave., N. Y. C.
John C. Rawe, S.J.	Cardinal Gibbons Institute	Ridge, Md.
John H. Reisner	Christian Rural Fellowship	156 5th Ave., N. Y. C.
Harry V. Richardson	Tuskegee Institute	Tuskegee Institute, Ala.
O. G. Salvesson	Representing National Lutheran Council	Flandreau, S. D.
Claude J. Snyder	Secy. Rural Church Dept., Evan- gelical and Reformed Church	1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo.
Mrs. Chandler Tatum	Methodist Church	150 5th Ave., N. Y. C.
Thomas Alfred Tripp	Congregational Boards	287 4th Ave., N. Y. C.
H. Barton Van Vliet	Field worker, Baptist	500 Jordan Ave., Montoursville, Pa.



<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>
Thomas L. Ayres	USDA Production & Marketing Administration	Washington, D. C.
Clara Bailey	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
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Harold Christie	USDA Farm Security Administration	Washington, D. C.
Emily C. Davis	USDA Bureau of Human Nutrition & Home Economics	Washington, D. C.
H. M. Dixon	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
Douglas Ensminger	USDA Extension Service and Bureau of Agricultural Economics	Washington, D. C.
Ward W. Fetrow	USDA Farm Credit Administration	Washington, D. C.
Ralph M. Fulghum	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
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Stephen C. Hughes	USDA Farm Security Administration	Washington, D. C.
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Margate Kienast	USDA Forest Service	Washington, D. C.
Willard Lamphere	USDA Production & Marketing Administration	Washington, D. C.
James F. Miles	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
Werner P. Meyer	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
J. D. Pope	USDA Farm Security Administration	Washington, D. C.
William C. Pryor	USDA Soil Conservation Service	Washington, D. C.
Mary Rokahr	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
Charles A. Sheffield	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
E. H. Shinn	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
Fred Shoder	USDA Forest Service	Washington, D. C.
Ray Smith	USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics	Washington, D. C.
Glen L. Taggart	USDA Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations	Washington, D. C.
F. J. Thackrey	USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics	Washington, D. C.
O. Ulrey	USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics	Washington, D. C.
Paul L. Vogt	USDA Bureau of Agricultural Economics	Washington, D. C.
Gertrude Warren	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
R. L. Webster	USDA Office of Information	Washington, D. C.
M. L. Wilson	USDA Extension Service	Washington, D. C.
B. Youngblood	USDA Office of Experiment Stations	Washington, D. C.
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D. L. MacDonald	American Institute of Cooperation	460 Drexel Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa.
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